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THOUGHTS

Occasioned by the late

EARTHQUAKES.

A

POEM.

By *BENJAMIN STILLINGFLEET.*

LONDON:

Printed for J. BRINDLEY in *New Bond-Street*, and sold by M. COOPER in *Pater-noster-Row*. 1750.

[Price Sixpence.]

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THE Biſhop of *London*'s Paſtoral Letter produced the following Lines; and my beſt Excuſe, if any be needful for publiſhing them, is; that a Poem may poſſibly fall into the Hands of ſome, who either would not read at all, or not with due Attention, that excellent Piece. If this ſhould prove to be the Caſe, and they ſhould awake any ſerious Thoughts in the giddy and vicious Part of Mankind, I ſhall think my Time not ill employed in writing them.

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Some THOUGHTS occaſioned by the late EARTHQUAKES.

YES, glorious Being, humbly I adore
Thy dreadful footſteps! Who but Thou, could ſhake
The firm foundations of this ſolid Globe?
Thou, by whoſe potent breath old Ocean ſwells
Into huge mountains, and o'erturns at once
Cities and mounds, and all the works of Man:
Even works, whoſe texture ſeem'd with rocks to vie!
Heaps rolled on heaps, all moulder at thy touch,
And crumble into atoms. Wing'd by Thee
The viewleſs Air grows like the Cryſtal firm,
And ruines all before it. For when Thou
Haſt iſſued forth thy juſt and ſure decree;
Nothing is ſtrong or weak, but as it ſerves

Thy Will omnipotent. Then, at thy throne,
Let me again my adorations pay;
And own the hand that wrought this mighty deed!

Let bold and vain Philoſophers diſpute
Of what they dimly ſee, or dream they ſee:
Deſpiſe the Vulgar, and with idle prate
Try to confound the Workman with the Work.
But who at firſt the mighty Vapour form'd?
Who plac'd it there? and Who aſſign'd it's Courſe?
Would he who framed this mighty maſs of things;
Who clothes it all in Beauty; makes it move
With harmony; and every Part adjuſts
With niceſt order: Can we think, that He
Would leave this wond'rous ſubterraneous power
To act at random? Would the Hand divine
Thus work by halves: work in a way beneath
The ſkill of Man? Oh no, the Thought's abſurd!
As well might Planet upon Planet ruſh
Without his guidance. He, who knows but this

Knows

Knows al

To blame

From Heav

But there's a

And Deſolation

'Tis better far to k

Then vaniſh every leſs imp

And let the dire Exploſion bring to

That Day, when the foundations of

Shall quiver to the Center: when the

Of Angels and Archangels ſhall reſound

Through this vaſt Concave, and awake the

When all the trappings of this World ſhall paſs,

And every Man in his own ſhape appear

Before the great and dread Tribunal, fix'd

For final Judgment; there to give account,

A ſtrict account for every foul miſdeed.

BRITAIN, ſurrounded by her ſubject Main,

Defenſe more ſure than Ramparts, or than Rocks;

found
damaged

Of this ſhe only hears,
t when her time is come,
her: from the diſtant South
oying Locuſts forth ſhall come
egions, and our fields lay waſte
mmands who made them: nor ſhall feel
change of Climate. At his powerful nod
The very Winds, whoſe favouring breath conveys
Our ſhips to every port around the Globe;
And brings the riches of the Nations home:
That makes our Merchants Princes: and to us
Aſſigns the vaſt dominion of the Sea:

Thoſe

Thoſe very Winds, at his all-powerful nod,
Shall war againſt us, and deſtroy our fleets,
If he but wills, this mild and wholeſome Air
That now invigorates our comely limbs,
To Man ſhall grow infectious: and our Towns
Shall ſwarm with carcaſes, as now our fields:
Or, what of late we but too juſtly feared.
Convincing and alarming Proof! that He
Wanteth not ſtores to execute his wrath
Wherever Vengeance calls: the gaping Gulph
Shall overwhelm us if he give the word.

THOU, beſt enlightner of the humane Mind,
Religion, guide me to thy ſacred page!
There let me penſive muſe, and turn my eyes
On *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, on *Babylon*
Sidon and *Tyre*: but laſt and chief of all,
On thee, *Jeruſalem!* There let me mark
The various warning given the choſen Seed,
With more than a paternal tenderneſs,

Before the final ruine. Let me weigh
In equal ſcale their crimes againſt our own,
And judge if we are not what they once were.
Does not Oppreſſion ſtride with giant ſtep
Throughout this land, and tread upon the necks
Of the defenceleſs and the innocent?
Do not our Orphans and our Widows ſigh
In vain for Juſtice, and look up to Heaven,
Their only refuge? Have not Infidels
Trampled on all things ſacred, and defy'd
The living God? Nay, have not Prieſts themſelves
Taught us to prove rebellious to that Being
Whom they were ſworn to ſerve? Do we not all
Offer up incenſe both to Luxury
And Avarice at once? See, in our ſtreets
Unpuniſh'd flaunts the Harlot, with fair ſpeech
And wanton arts to draw our heedleſs Youth
Like oxen to the Slaughter? *Sodom*'s ſin,
Forgive me, ye chaſte Ears; that crying Sin

Long here unknown, now hardly ſkulks; O Land
Of Virtue once, how art thou now become
A prey to every Vice that bears a name!
And calls not this for Vengeance from above?
Yet ſtill ſupinely in the very time
Of peril, all our follies we purſue,
And all our ſins; and with preſumptuous thought,
Or fix the dreadful day, or boldly cry,
It is not near: Pray Heaven it may not be!
May we avert it by inceſſant prayer,
And that beſt ſacrifice, an humble Heart,
Pure, undefil'd; and at the throne of Grace
Made acceptable by our great High-Prieſt.
Be this each Soul's concern; but chiefly, Thou,
Imperial City: be the firſt to lead
The Way in Humiliation: may thy Prieſts
Clothed in the robe of Righteouſneſs declare
The People's ſins, and ſpare not: May all try
Princes and Prieſts and People with one voice,

To deprecate Heaven's wrath; that it may ſpare
The many unrighteous for the righteous few;
And give time for repentance! Gracious Heaven!
To thy once-favour'd People grant this boon:
The ſpirit of Wiſdom breathe throughout this Land,
And lead us to the paths we long have ſhunn'd.
Teach us obedience to thy holy Word,
That word which our Forefathers uſed to deem
Their chiefeſt Grace and Glory! Can the Maid
Forget her ornaments? or the young Bride
Her gay attire? yet we, unnatural Race,
Days without number have forgot thy Word.
Or, 'tis become but as a pleaſant Song,
Sung by a melodious Voice to Inſtruments
Well tuned and touch'd with Skill. For, if we hear,
We do it not. Oh, teach us this, good Heaven,
Oh, teach us to fear Thee, and we are ſafe.

F I N I S.